

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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"HINCHEY AMENDMENT" FUNDS DISTRIBUTED TO APPLE GROWERS

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (NY-26) today announced that \$38 million is now being distributed to apple and potato growers to partially compensate them for weather-related damages suffered in 1999 and 2000. The funds were appropriated as a result of an amendment Hinchey wrote in 2000.

"I saw first-hand the devastation to apple growers caused by hail and other severe weather in 1999 and 2000," said Hinchey. "The federal government should be doing everything it can to help these hardworking people who have suffered so much in recent years. I am gratified that these funds are finally getting into the hands of the growers."

As a member of the House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee, Hinchey wrote the amendment to the Fiscal Year 2001 Agriculture Appropriations bill to provide \$115 million in emergency relief for growers who have suffered several consecutive years of weather-related crop losses and record low prices. The congressional leadership made repeated attempts to strip Hinchey's amendment from the bill, but failed. The bill passed the House with the Hinchey amendment intact in June 2000. Then, as a member of the joint House-Senate conference committee, Hinchey negotiated the final agreement in which the amount was raised to \$138 million. One hundred million dollars of that sum was set aside for market losses suffered by apple growers, while \$38 million was earmarked for quality losses suffered by apple and potato growers due to weather-related problems. The market loss assistance was distributed last year.

Apple and potato growers who suffered at least a 20 percent loss in the quality of their crop were eligible to apply for the Quality Loss Program. Payments are made for loss in value due to quality and for losses due to unharvested production. Growers are receiving compensation equal to 27.8 percent of their weather-related losses.